DISABLED PERSONS BULLETIN

No. 1/1992 (spring issue)

SPECIAL END-DECADE ISSUE

SPECIAL SESSION TO HIGHLIGHT FUTURE DIRECTIONS BEYOND THE DECADE

In resolution 46/704, the General Assembly at its forty-sixth session decided to devote four of its plenary meetings to mark, at the appropriate level, the conclusion of the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons (1983-1992). The two-day session will be held on 12 and 13 October 1992 in the General Assembly Hall at United Nations Headquarters.

The agenda of the special meetings will include the monitoring of the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons and long-term strategy to the year 2000 and beyond. The programme of these special meetings will consist of two parts:

- During the ceremonial part, **Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali** will inaugurate the meetings, followed by addresses by the President of the General Assembly and the chairpersons of the five regional groups (Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe, Western Europe and Latin America);
- The substantive part of the programme will provide an opportunity for statements by representatives of Member States and subsidiary bodies of the General Assembly.

It is envisaged that the special meetings will adopt a declaration reaffirming their commitment to the practical implementation of the World Programme of Action beyond the Decade, with a view to attaining the objectives of a society for all.

This will be the first time that the General Assembly will debate in plenary the disability issue and it is thus hoped that the topic, which is crucial for development, will remain on the agenda of the United Nations as a priority area in the 1990s. ■

The World Programme of Action sets forth a new and challenging approach to disability that will open the way for future generations to participate fully in society.

Published by United Nations Office at Vienna, Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs, P.O. Box 500, A-1400 Vienna, Austria

TOWARDS A SOCIETY FOR ALL: A WAY FORWARD

The United Nations has long been in the vanguard of the global movement to equalize opportunities for disabled persons. During the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons, the World Programme of Action has served as a major policy guideline and reference for Member States. Its principles have been frequently endorsed and further elaborated with concerted efforts on the part of the United Nations system. Much progress has been made. Few, if any, countries have, however, fully realized the goals of the World Programme and progress has been slow. In the final year of the Decade, it is high time to harness the awareness and activism generated and to move to other planes in which the vital role of disabled persons in society is being recognized. It is time to develop a forward-looking approach with long-term commitments.

At the invitation of the Government of Canada, the United Nations is organizing an expert group meeting in conjunction with the "Independence '92" congress, to be held in Vancouver from 25-29 April 1992. The purpose of the meeting is to draw up a long-term strategy to further the implementation of the World Programme of Action to the Year 2000 and beyond.

In line with the spirit of the World Programme, the ultimate objective of the long-term strategy should be to enhance the well-being of persons with disabilities and to accelerate the pace of positive change.

This implies that they should be assured the right to a fair share of available resources, equal opportunity and full participation in society, and independence and self-determination. It is the responsibility of society to ensure that its disabled population can make full use of its potential. Prerequisites for this include observance of human rights, effective prevention, rehabilitation, full accessibility to society and appropriate social services. In this context, the concept of "A Society for All" implies that it is up to society to accommodate itself to the differences of its members rather than obliging people to adjust to the existing structures of society.

Since all targets cannot be reached simultaneously, there is a need to select priorities for the medium term. The General Assembly at its forty-sixth session identified the following priority areas: community-based rehabilitation, independent living and economic independence.

In the course of numerous discussions in 1991 and early 1992 between Governments, United Nations agencies and organizations of disabled persons, it was suggested that the new strategy should build upon the successful development processes initiated during the Decade, such as mainstreaming, partnership and the involvement of disabled persons in decentralized decision-making, coordination, advocacy and innovative ways to mobilize funds. The strategy will encompass a broad spectrum of short- and long-term objectives and will suggest how individual nations and the international community can address the needs and concerns of persons with disabilities at the grass-roots level, ultimately leading to a society for all.

It is evident that disability should be kept on the agenda of the General Assembly after the Decade and it is of vital importance that each country and organization establish an appropriate forum for identifying priorities and setting feasible targets which can be reached in partnership with persons with disabilities and their organizations. ■

Rehabilitation and training for all, to ensure the full participation of disabled persons in society.

SIGN OF THE TIMES:
IT STARTED SIXTEEN YEARS AGO

During the celebration of the United Nations' 25th anniversary in 1970, the Secretary-General, U Thant, requested his collaborators to review the main achievements of the Organization and help him identify obstacles and problems likely to face the United Nations in the years to come. The findings compiled by the specialized departments for the Secretary-General revealed that serious global crises were looming on the horizon, including that of population increase, overconsumption of natural resources, threats to the environment, intolerable discrimination against women, and the complex problems of economic and social development of the new nations emerging from the long colonial night.

Subsequently, the Secretary-General sent Robert Muller, at that time Secretary of the Economic and Social Council, to seek the views of the specialized agencies on the major problems which would require the immediate attention of the international community in the forthcoming decade of the '70s. During discussions with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the International Labour Organisation (ILO), the World Health Organization (WHO), Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), Mr. Muller learned that the problem of disabled persons had taken tragic dimensions. It was estimated that there were approximately 500 million disabled persons in the world, or 10 per cent of the total population. In developing countries, the causes of disability remained war, violence, ignorance, malnutrition and disease, while new causes had appeared in industrialized countries, such as traffic and work-related accidents which kill 250,000 persons and wound another 500,000 each year. According to ILO sources, there were 50 million work-related accidents reported in factories, approximately 160,000 a day. With increased life expectancy, an important number of aged citizens suffered from disabilities. Projections were made that in the year 2030, approximately 34 per cent of the population in the industrialized

In this issue:

	Page
Special session to highlight future directions beyond the Decade	1
Towards a society for all: A way forward	2
Sign of the times: It started sixteen years ago	3
Joint statement of UN agencies, bodies and non-governmental organizations	6
• **Major accomplishments of the Decade**	6
• **Problems encountered**	8
• **Challenges for the future**	8
Contributions to the Decade	9
• **China: The eighth five-year work plan 1991-1995**	9
• **Finland: Aiming at full independence**	11
• **Russian Federation: Round-the-world expedition for the end of the Decade**	11
• **Sweden: Closing the gap**	12
• **Turkey: Adjustments in employment**	12
• **The World Blind Union: Guarding the interests of blind people**	13
• **Disabled Peoples' International: Setting the course for the future**	13
• **World Federation of the Deaf: Working towards the goals for 1995**	14
• **Rehabilitation International: 17th World Congress**	14
• **International Federation of Disabled Workers and Civilian Handicapped: Commemoration of the end of the Decade for Disabled Persons**	15
• **ECE: Project on rehabilitation engineering**	16
• **ESCAP: Contribution to the Decade**	16
• **ESCWA: Guarding the interest of the region**	16
International calendar of events	17

READEX
FICHE

countries would be over 60, due to low fertility and low mortality.

Fully aware of the magnitude of the disability problem, the Secretary- General made an enlightened statement which was distributed to Governments, the press as well as to many disability organizations. Encouraged by the message of the Secretary-General, non-governmental organizations decided to strengthen their pressure on Governments in order to convince them to take decisions and act consequently.

It should be recalled that it was at the initiative of non-governmental organizations that the declarations on the rights of mentally-disabled persons and those of disabled persons were adopted by the General Assembly in 1971 and 1975 respectively. On 6 May 1975, the Economic and Social Council adopted a resolution on the prevention and rehabilitation of disabled persons.

The International Year of Disabled Persons

One year later, on 16 December 1976, at the initiative of the Government of the Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, the General Assembly proclaimed 1981 the International Year of Disabled Persons (IYDP). The general principle underlying the proclamation and observance of an International Year was that the international community should become aware of the existence of a major problem which called for solutions through international consultation, concerted action and cooperation at all levels. During the year, high priority was to be given to the humanitarian and social needs of the 500 million disabled persons whose situations had hitherto been intolerable.

The General Assembly subsequently appointed an IYDP Advisory Committee, consisting of 23 Member States, to help prepare a World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons (WPACDP), and also adopted a Plan of Action for the Year. The Secretary-General appointed Lihau N'Kanza, the Director of the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs, as executive secretary of the IYDP secretariat, entrusted with substantive and administrative guidance for the execution of activities related to the year.

The International Year of Disabled Persons and the United Nations Decade have contributed to greater awareness of, and change of perceptions towards, disabled people.

One of the successes of IYDP was the establishment of national coordinating committees in 147 countries to coordinate the execution of activities planned for the Year. A regional expert meeting, followed by a regional seminar at the ministerial level, was held in each of the five regions to prepare regional plans of action. The IYDP was a milestone in United Nations' activities in the field of disabi-

The fourth and last session of the 23 Members of the International Year of Disabled Persons Advisory Committee which finalized the draft of the World Programme of Action in 1982. Prince Talal, President of AGFUND was invited as special guest.

lity, a successful international event which promoted global awareness of the rights and problems of disabled persons.

World Programme of Action

In late 1982, the General Assembly adopted the WPACDP and proclaimed the period 1983-1992 as the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons. Member States and organizations were urged to intensify their activites in the disability field during this decade.

Mid-term review of the Decade's achievements

In 1987, a global meeting of experts was convened in Stockholm, Sweden, to assess the implementation of the World Programme of Action at the mid-point of the Decade. The meeting acknowledged that the adoption of the World Programme of Action with its new and stimulating approach, had opened the way to a future in which disabled persons may participate fully in society. It was based on the recognition of the rights of disabled persons, first and foremost as citizens and only secondarily as clients of social services. By defining disabled persons in relation to their environment and from the perspective of human rights, the World Programme of Action gave a new dimension to the disability issue and represented a major step forward in social thinking.

The principles contained in the World Progamme of Action have never been completely integrated in the social and economic plans and programmes of nations, neither has the United Nations been entirely successful in convincing Governments to give a higher priority to disability issues and to translate into action the policies and principles of the World Programme of Action.

The Stockholm Meeting, 1987: assessing the requirements in the disability field for the years to come.

1992: The turning point and a long-term approach

The Expert Group Meeting on Alternative Ways to Mark the End of the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons, held in Järvenpää, Finland, in May 1990, acknowledged that the international context in which the concerns of disabled people had been addressed in the 1980s had changed and would continue to change in the years ahead. It noted that it was therefore the duty of the international community to formulate a long-term strategy which should be based on a new partnership between Governments, organizations and agencies of the United Nations system as well as non-governmental organizations, particularly those concerned with disabled persons.

The new partnership should evolve around the international issues affecting society such as underdevelopment, human rights, illiteracy, environmental pollution, armed conflict and malnutrition. It is within these issues that the concerns of disabled persons should be articulated and ultimately resolved.

In 1992, the international community will assess the impact of the Decade and identify major obstacles. A long-term strategy to further the implementation of the World Programme of Action beyond 1992 will be adopted with a view to building a "society for all": a society of which people with disabilities will be an integral part. ■

The 1987 Global Meeting of Experts: Miss Margaret J. Anstee, the then Director-General of UNOV, chaired the discussions.

JOINT STATEMENT OF AGENCIES, BODIES AND NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

Introduction

One special feature of the Decade has been that unprecedented collaboration has developed between various entities of the United Nations system and organizations of and for disabled persons. The inter-agency meetings on the Decade, held once a year at Vienna under the aegis of the United Nations Office at Vienna/Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs, have been charged with elaborating concepts, policies and mechanisms for the effective implementation of the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons and with coordinating the various efforts of the participating United Nations entities and non-governmental organizations.

The Joint Statement, adopted by the Ninth Inter-Agency Meeting on the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons,* held at Vienna from 3 to 6 December 1991, is an attempt to summarize the work accomplished by inter-agency meetings during the Decade, as well as to highlight some of the major challenges that lie ahead. The Joint Statement is intended to send out a signal that organizations are united in our commitment to continue efforts in pursuance of the objectives of the Decade even after the Decade has come to an end. The Statement is also an acknowledgement of the fact that the world is still far from recognizing and effectively taking into account the needs and rights of people with disabilities and making them a concern for everyone.

Major accomplishments of the Decade

The major outcome of the International Year of Disabled Persons was the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons. We saw it as our task to advance knowledge and understanding of the World Programme of Action and its underlying philosophy and to incorporate to the extent possible its provisions and recommendations into the work programmes of our organizations. We feel that we have largely achieved that objective. We are convinced that the World Programme of Action has received widespread recognition as an important policy guideline and reference document.

Throughout the Decade, we have had the full and active participation of organizations of disabled persons. We have contributed to the world-wide recognition of the principle that disabled persons should have a say in matters concerning them.

We are not yet satisfied with the practical application of that principle because, far too often, disabled persons and their organizations are still being excluded from decisions concerning them.

We believe, however, that by following that principle not only have we been able to set an example, but we have also greatly benefited from the resulting closer cooperation with disabled persons and their organizations.

There is sufficient evidence that in the past nine years of collaboration the international non-governmental organizations participating in the inter-agency meetings on the Decade have not only actively contributed their views, but have also benefited by developing a global outlook and sense of responsibility, thus becoming true partners of the United Nations and its specialized agencies. We feel that in the disability sector, cooperation between the United Nations system and these international non-governmental organizations should continue, regardless of the nature or framework of that cooperation.

In the course of the Decade, we have come to realize that the concept of equalization of opportunities referred to in the World Programme of Action has been increasing in importance. It is difficult to assess to what degree that concept has made its way into the policies of Governments and international organizations.

We believe, however, that by intensifying our discussions on the implications of that concept we have significantly contributed to the introduction of a major change in the focus of disability policy: away from focusing exclusively on specialized services and towards integrating the concern for disability into the mainstream of national policies and programmes as a matter of human rights.

We firmly believe that the Decade has contributed to the removal of many physical barriers for disabled per-

* *The Joint Statement was adopted by the following participants: United Nations Office at Vienna/Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs, Department of International Economic and Social Affairs/Department of Public Information, Department of International Economic and Social Affairs/Statistical Office, Economic Commission for Europe, United Nations Development Programme/IMPACT, International Labour Organisation, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and World Health Organization.*

sons. Society has become more accessible and, as a result, the presence and visibility of disabled people in everyday life have increased. We are convinced that, in general, society has become more aware of the needs and rights of disabled people. We have seen it as our task to reinforce that positive development and to enhance the equal participation of the disabled in all walks of life.

During the Decade, several United Nations entities represented at the inter-agency meetings on the Decade have undertaken major efforts to develop new international standards that have reflected this policy shift: the United Nations Office at Vienna/Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs, by developing standard rules on equalization of opportunities for disabled persons; the Centre for Human Rights of the Secretariat, by issuing in 1991 a major report on the human rights of disabled persons; and the International Labour Organisation, by adopting, in 1983, an international convention (No. 159) and a recommendation (No. 168) on the vocational rehabilitation and employment of disabled persons.

In addition to this, the Decade has also brought increased awareness that many disabling conditions are preventable. The United Nations organizations represented at the inter-agency meetings have recorded significant progress in bringing under control a number of disability-producing diseases, a process which has involved the coordinated efforts of national Governments, international agencies and voluntary organizations, including the private sector. However, it is recognized that much still remains to be done to meet the challenges of disability prevention in the 1990s, as the number of disabled persons continues to increase as a result of the very success of child survival and development efforts at one end of the spectrum and the rapid growth of the ageing population at the other, with its propensity for age-related disabilities.

Removing physical barriers for disabled persons, and increasing accessibility to life.

This situation will require even greater recognition of the need to adopt disability prevention measures as a health and development priority, the fuller utilization of the simple but effective technologies which now exist and which could change the situation at acceptable cost, the adoption of new approaches, and increased cooperation and collaboration at all levels.

Several organizations with major disability programmes, supported by the principal donor agencies, have engaged in an increased level of technical cooperation activities in order to assist developing countries in establishing programmes and in developing policies in accordance with the standards of the Decade.

At the same time, efforts have been undertaken to develop and strengthen coordinating mechanisms for disability programmes at the national level. Support to disabled persons' organizations has been given high priority.

These efforts have not always led to sustainable disability programmes; they will have to be improved and expanded in the years to come.

One of the major achievements of the inter-agency meetings on the Decade has been that we have improved our knowledge of the work and specific contribution of each participating organization and that we have thus been able to reach an unprecedented level of coordination, as evidenced by the high level of consensus on policy issues (despite many controversial discussions) and by the close collaboration in the preparation of technical documents.

In conclusion, we believe that at the international level we have been able

to accomplish a lot through joint efforts, despite often diverging interests and a noticeable erosion of support for disability activities as the Decade progressed.

Problems encountered

We have also been facing major constraints in implementing the recommendations and the policy we have been advocating. One of the major problems has been that we have not been able to persuade Governments to give higher priority to disability issues and to provide the resources that would have permitted us to engage in more forceful initiatives and to translate policy into action more effectively.

Another closely related constraint has been a dependence on the somewhat lengthy procedures inherent in the United Nations system and a general unawareness of the fact that the policies in favour of disabled persons, as advocated by the inter-agency meetings on the Decade and the above-mentioned policy documents, have not been just a humanitarian undertaking, but an important contribution to the formulation of global, social and economic policies.

We also have come to understand the difficulties Governments and organizations may have in reorienting their policies and programmes in accordance with international standards and global policies. As far as we have been able to monitor developments during the Decade, we have received little evidence of an immediate translation of the theoretical achievements into practical action. We are confident, however, that the global principles that the United Nations organizations and their international non-governmental organization partners have developed will eventually find their way into national policy.

One tragic development has been that the Decade, which has had as its objective the stimulation and promotion of new initiatives in favour of disabled persons, particularly in developing countries, has coincided with a deep economic crisis in the majority of those countries. Rigid structural adjustment policies have seriously affected the development of social sector policies and have made any substantial progress in terms of disability-related activities practically impossible. In addition, many industrialized countries have been facing periods of economic recession and have therefore shown little inclination to take decisive steps in the direction of improving their disability programmes.

Challenges for the future

We see it as our task to continue the intensified promotion of the objectives of the Decade against all these odds in the years to come. We base our belief in the success of this endeavour not only on the strength we gain from continuing our collaboration, but also on the hope that the issues we have raised will finally be recognized as part of a fundamental strategy for an appropriate and financially feasible social policy.

The challenge we face is therefore to lead the discussion in the direction of the global concept of a "society for all", that is, a society that learns to accommodate the diversity of its members without falling into the trap of segregating some of them and creating expensive structures and programmes to maintain them at the margins of society.

We are therefore conscious of the fact that we – and all who wish to join us in this endeavour – have before us the difficult task of promoting the concept of integrating disability concerns into global and national social and economic policies, particularly into policies devised by the major organizations concerned with development programmes.

In order to achieve this we are committed to exploring new forms of effective cooperation, to extending our collaboration, to supporting and complementing each other and, thus, to continuing our work in order to accomplish the objectives of the Decade in the years to come.

We call on Governments and all organizations interested in advancing the rights of disabled persons to contribute to this joint effort of the United Nations system and the participating international non-governmental organizations. ■

CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE DECADE

Throughout the world, many countries have been in the forefront in building a solid disability programme, taking on the challenges of equalizing opportunities and protecting the rights of disabled persons. Countries have passed laws, set up national disability programmes, and many have revived their coordination mechanisms.

The following achievements of a selected group of countries including China, Finland, Sweden and Turkey are presented below as an illustration of milestones reached. It is worth mentioning that China, Finland and Sweden have been particularly supportive of the Decade and the United Nations Disability Programme. They have played a vital role in hosting United Nations meetings and developing disability policies.

In 1987, for example, Sweden hosted the Global Meeting of Experts to Review the Implementation of the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons at the Midpoint of the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons.

The outcome of this meeting has led to the strengthening of United Nations Office at Vienna/Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs (UNOV/CSDHA), in order to enable the Disabled Persons Unit to perform adequately its focal point function. Sweden has also co-financed several projects in the disability field, including legislation, the elaboration of standard rules on the equalization of opportunities for disabled persons as well as the information network and clearing house.

Finland's support to programmes for the formulation of disability and policies from 1989 onwards, has resulted in several initiatives. Responding to a call from the international community to examine ways to mark the end of the Decade, in 1990 Finland hosted the Expert Group Meeting on Alternative Ways to Mark the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons. In addition, Finland has sponsored a project on integrating the needs and concerns of disabled persons into national planning and development co-operation projects.

In China, progressive social welfare policies produced a number of spin-offs for the international community such as the hosting in 1990 of the International Meeting on the Roles and Functions of National Coordinating Committees on Disability in Developing Countries. In addition, its active participation in the Ad Hoc Open-Ended Working Group to Elaborate Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Disabled Persons has provided evidence of China's success in its disability programme.

China

The eighth five-year work plan 1991-1995

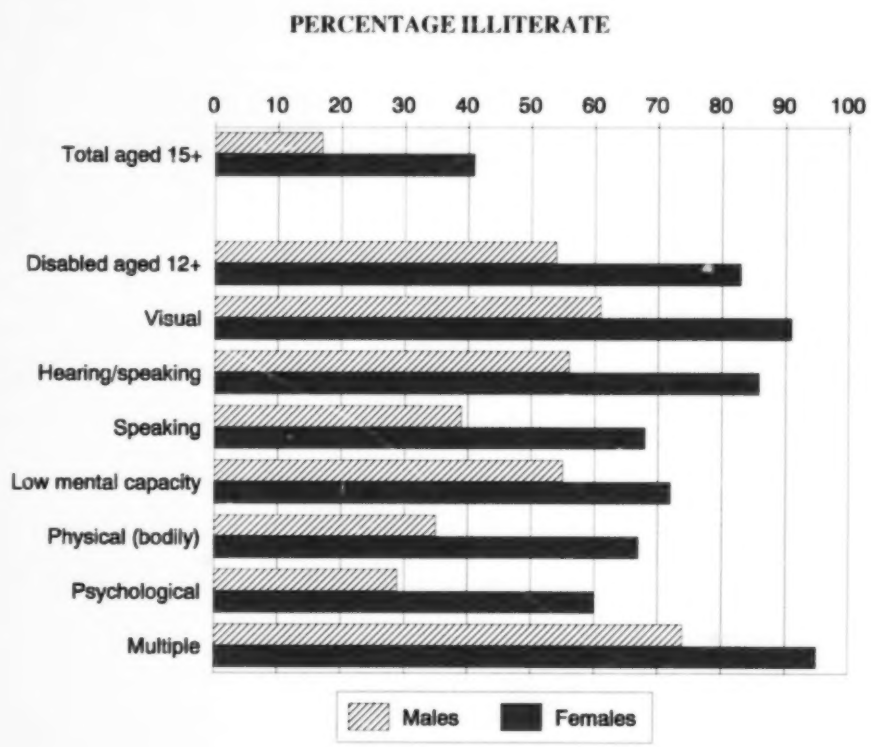
During the past three years China has made considerable progress in programmes in favour of disabled persons. A law was passed on the protection of disabled persons; coordinating committees were set up from the State Council to the local governments, while federations of disabled persons were organized at different levels. Specific actions were undertaken in different areas such as:

- ***Rehabilitation:*** 430,000 cataract and 140,000 polio operations were performed, while 10,000 deaf children received hearing and language training;
- ***Education:*** A growing number of disabled students received basic compulsory education. There are now 820 special education middle schools and 2,651 special education classes in regular schools for approximately 105,000 disabled students;
- ***Employment:*** Welfare enterprises enjoy preferential tax policies. In addition, employment of disabled persons is enforced by law.
- ***Welfare:*** The mailing of reading material in braille is free of charge. Blind people can use public transportation in urban areas free of charge and enjoy other preferential policies such as exemption or reduction of certain taxes.
- ***Environment:*** Some cities have started to build accessible facilities according to the design code for accessible buildings and roads.

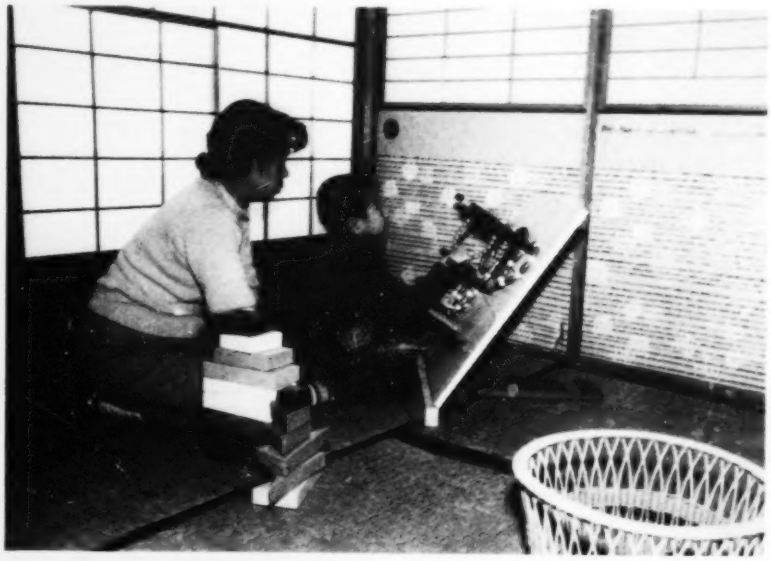
During the period of the eighth five-year work plan, the general objectives are:

- To improve the cultural, social and physical environment to enable the equal participation of disabled persons in society;
- To reduce the differences between programmes aimed at disabled persons and overall economic and social development;
- To provide more developmental opportunities for disabled people and improve the quality of their life.
- To enlarge the number of the disabled people who can receive rehabilitation, education and medical care;
- To raise the employment rate of disabled people;
- To encourage a spirit of self-reliance and participation; and
- To set up a legal system and structures for policy-making and the establishment of organizations concerned with the disabled. ➡

Illiteracy by sex for total and disabled population, China 1987



Source: United Nations Statistical Office, 1991.



The rehabilitation and education of disabled children is one of the major challenges facing China (Photo: WHO/D. Darbois).

Finland

Aiming at full independence

At the national level Finland has developed policies to promote equality and self-help among disabled persons and their full participation in society. It is worth noting that the Services and Assistance for Disabled Persons Act of 1988, initiated by the National Board for Social Welfare, provides for services and support measures which are arranged in such a way that disabled persons can achieve self-sufficiency and independence in daily life situations. Aware that discrimination is a basic obstacle to full participation, Finland is currently examining the possibility of introducing an anti-discrimination act in order to stem discrimination against disabled citizens.

Russian Federation

Round-the-world expedition for the end of the Decade

Preparations are being made by the Adventure Club in Moscow to organize the Trans-Russian Super Marathon in Wheelchairs from Vladivostok to St. Petersburg (12,000 kms) in the middle of April 1992. Dmitry Shparo, President of the Club, who visited CSDHA on 20 December 1991, hopes this end-Decade event will promote awareness of the talents and abilities of the disabled community in Russia and elsewhere, as well as their needs, concerns and full integration into society.

The marathon which is in line with the objectives of the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons, calls for full participation and self-realization in all aspects of life, including sports and cultural activities.

The expedition, will continue from St. Petersburg to Europe, the United States and Japan. The wheelchair athletes will return to Vladivostok in 1993 when the round-the-world tour will be completed.

The well-known Canadian wheelchair runner Rick Hansen will be greeting the athletes in St. Petersburg, to celebrate their achievements. A German firm which produces wheelchairs is the co-organizer and has manufactured special wheelchairs for the event.

Further information may be obtained from: Adventure Club, 15, Kosygin Street, Moscow 117946, Russian Federation. Tel: 232-58-35, Fax: 230-29-23.

Getting ready for the Super-Marathon.

Sweden

Closing the gap

A special parliamentary disability commission appointed by the Government of Sweden in 1989, has been investigating the situation of persons with severe functional impairments.

The Commission's task is to chart and analyse measures taken by the social services in support of persons with disabilities and, where improvements are needed, to put forward proposals for change.

In addition, the Commission has been mandated to investigate shortcomings regarding self-determination of individuals, employment opportunities and access to transport, housing, leisure and recreation.

In May 1991, the Commission presented its main report entitled ***"Disability, Welfare, Justice"***. Summarizing a number of the Commission's interim reports, it contains specific proposals aimed at eliminating deficiencies revealed in its surveys.

The proposals put forward include measures to bring about changes in personal conditions through rehabilitation, health care and medical services; changes in the structure of society, through measures creating accessibility; and support services aimed specifically at catering to the needs of individual persons with functional impairments.

The proposals are to be put into effect by means of new legislation and changes in financial support. The Riksdag, the Parliament of Sweden, will consider making the Government's proposals a basis for legislation in 1992 and the new "Support and Services Act for Persons with Certain Functional Impairments" should then be able to enter into force on 1 January 1993.

The Government of Sweden hopes thereby to reduce the state of exclusion experienced by many persons with disabilities and to assure them of good living conditions in the future.

Turkey

Adjustments in employment

In the last five years, Turkey's Labour Placement Institution has given special attention to disabled citizens looking for jobs. While applications in 1988 were around 8,000, this number increased to 10,822 in 1989 and to 12,576 in 1990. The increase in employment could be largely attributed to the effective coordination of national vocational rehabilitation programmes as well as support received from employees.

Under a newly-created employment guaranteed professional education system, both the public and private sector joined hands in providing full assistance in the training of disabled workers, and the creation of job opportunities in a highly competitive market. In addition, Turkey has given high priority to professional training in schools for disabled students. ■

Mr. Bengt Lindqvist (left), Former Minister for Family Affairs and Matters concerning the Disabled and Elderly, Sweden, on an official visit to UNOV/CSDHA, with staff members of DPU. Mr. Lindqvist was instrumental in shaping policies to equalize opportunities for disabled persons in Sweden.

The World Blind Union

Guarding the interests of blind people

With the needs and rights of blind people very much in mind, the World Blind Union's regional organizations were active during the United Nations Decade. The World Blind Union opened its new African headquarters at Nairobi and held a number of seminars and workshops in both Kenya and Ghana.

In October 1991, the East Asia/Pacific Regional Union held its General Assembly meeting in Tokyo and the Pacific Island Council for the Blind was formed to look after the needs of blind people in the scattered island communities in the region.

In the Latin American region, seminars were held in Venezuela on human rights and blind persons. In collaboration with the national organization of blind persons in Spain, and other international non-governmental organizations, some 500 projects are being prepared for implementation in the years beyond the Decade.

In the European region in 1991, a youth conference was held in Denmark, and an exhibition of technical aids in Germany. The World Blind Union is currently concerned with the serious problems confronting blind people in the former socialist countries of Eastern Europe, in particular unemployment and retraining.

In North America, the World Blind Union organized a conference on technology and blindness in September 1991, and its affiliate, the National Federation of the Blind, established a permanent exhibition of technical aids in its headquarters in Baltimore.

As an end-Decade event for 1992, the World Blind Union will hold its Third General Assembly, which will take place in Cairo, Egypt, from 2-6 November.

One of the Assembly's main tasks will be to adopt a plan of action for the next four years. A task force, including members of international and national non-governmental organizations has already been set up to prepare a draft for submission to the Assembly. The highest priority will be given to rehabilitation and education, which currently only reaches a small percentage of blind people.

Further information may be obtained from: World Blind Union, 224 Great Portland Street, London W1N 6AA, Great Britain.

Disabled Peoples' International

Setting the course for the future

As an end-Decade activity, Disabled Peoples' International (DPI) will be mounting the Third World Congress to be held in Vancouver, Canada, in April 1992, in conjunction with the "Independence' 92" International Congress and Exposition on Disability. The overall objective of the DPI World Congress III will be to review ten years of accomplishments and at the same time generate interest in, and enthusiasm for, its future programmes. ➡

Disabled Peoples' International has been instrumental in improving the status of disabled women.

"We're making history" will be the theme of the Congress. Participants will examine DPI's achievements, its role and impact on international issues, including peacemaking, human rights and the status of disabled women. The organization's future will also be discussed, with special emphasis on cohesive programme planning and its relationship with the United Nations family.

The DPI Third World Congress hopes to formulate a declaration recommending, *inter alia*, that some government resources currently funding rehabilitation organizations should be redirected to assist consumer organizations.

With this declaration, DPI hopes to keep the United Nations Decade for Disabled Persons alive beyond 1992.

Further information may be obtained from: Chairman, Disabled Peoples' International, Southern Africa Federation of the Disabled, No. 1 Crescent Court, 130 Herbert Chitepo/12th Avenue, P.O. Box 2247, Bulawayo, Zimbabwe.

World Federation of the Deaf

Working towards the goals for 1995

The programme for 1991-1995 of the World Federation of the Deaf (WFD) was approved by its 13th General Assembly in Tokyo, Japan, on 3 July 1991.

Working towards its goal to ensure that deaf persons all over the world, and especially in developing countries, reach equality as far as their rights are concerned, WFD will give priority to the following issues:

- The abolishment of discrimination against deaf persons;
- Increasing public awareness of the deaf community and its sign languages;
- Strengthening the societal status of the deaf;
- Deaf education;
- Creating opportunities for deaf groups to set up associations or strengthen existing associations.

In order to achieve these goals, WFD will continue, in its capacity as umbrella organization, to give support to its member organizations.

A manual on planning and implementing advocacy work and services for deaf people will be completed. WFD will also provide help by disseminating information on deafness-related issues and by coordinating international events arranged by member organizations.

Regional activities during 1991-1995 will cover all continents by establishing new regional secretariats and by developing and strengthening services providing facilities for deaf persons.

The secretariats will coordinate the work of national deaf associations in their region, organize meetings, seminars and festivals, as well as encourage the exchange of information and cooperation between deaf associations, authorities and professionals.

WFD will also continue to cooperate with the United Nations, with which it has consultative status.

One immediate priority is to see that greater attention to deaf issues is paid in the World Programmme of Action concerning Disabled Persons. Efforts will also be made to ensure the follow-up of action started during the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons.

Rehabilitation International

17th World Congress

The 17th World Congress of Rehabilitation International, hosted by the Government of Kenya, will be held in Nairobi from 7-11 September 1992.

Participants will discuss the following themes: equalization of opportunities; accelerating efforts in the 1990s; the state of the art in the Third World.

The Congress will also review the achievements of the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons. A plan of action for the 1990s will be drawn up.

One entire day, 9 September, will be set aside for local and international workshops, as well as for visits to various rehabilitation facilities in and around Nairobi.

The Congress will make every effort to ensure the full participation of disabled persons: the Kenyatta International Conference Centre is barrier-free and plans have been made to make Nairobi city centre fully accessible to disabled persons.

During the Congress, the first meeting of the United Nations Task Force on Disabled Children and Women will be convened.

In collaboration with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), other United Nations entities and non-governmental organizations, Rehabilitation International will pursue the goals set by the World Summit for Children, organized by UNICEF in New York in September 1990.

International Federation of Disabled Workers and Civilian Handicapped (FIMITIC)

Commemoration of the end of the Decade for Disabled Persons

"Full participation and equality" was the theme of the thirty-third World Day of the Disabled of the International Federation of Disabled Workers and Civilian Handicapped, observed on 27 March 1992.

A ceremony commemorating the event, organized by the Federation in cooperation with the United Nations Office at Vienna, in the Austria Centre, Vienna also marked the end of the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons (1983-1992).

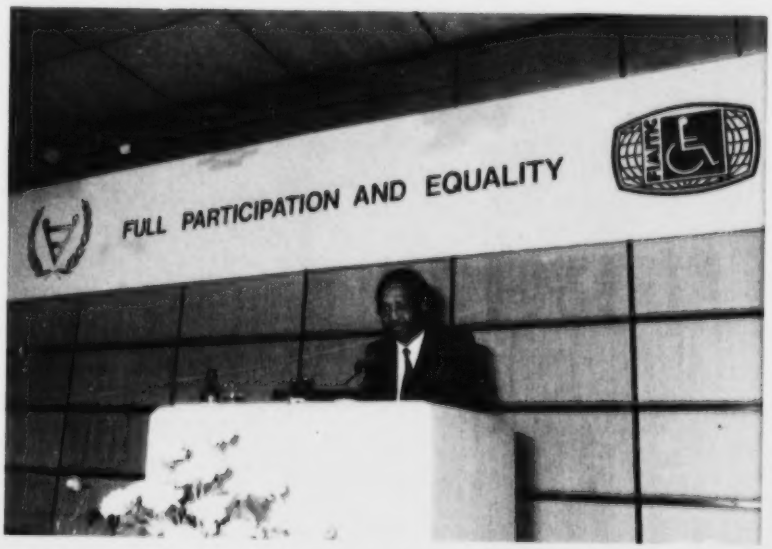
In a message to the meeting read out by Henryk J. Sokalski, Director of the Social Development Division of the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs of the United Nations Office at Vienna, Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali, paid tribute to the work and efforts of the Federation.

He drew attention to the common goals shared by the Federation and the United Nations, such as equalization of opportunities for disabled persons, prevention of disability, full integration and participation and protection of the basic rights of people with disabilities. He also stressed that in areas such as human rights, development, environment, trade, humanitarian relief and conflict resolution – key issues for the United Nations today – solutions had to accommodate the needs of all.

The meeting was opened by the President of FIMITIC, Albert Caminada, who underlined the significance of the Decade, especially its role in raising awareness of disability issues. He stressed, however, that there was still a need to continue efforts to maintain that awareness in order to overcome existing barriers and discrimination and to achieve the goal of full participation and equality.

Hans Hoegh, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Promotion of the Decade, praised the work of FIMITIC and urged the Federation to strengthen relations with other organizations so that the awareness, provided by the Decade, could be turned into action.

At the conclusion of the meeting, FIMITIC adopted a resolution calling on Governments to do their utmost to prevent disability; to reduce discrimination against disabled persons; to provide living conditions for those with disability that maintain their human dignity; and to guarantee them education and opportunities for free-time activities. The resolution also stressed that special attention should be given to the situation of disabled persons in the developing world and in Eastern Europe. ■



Call for support to disabled persons in developing nations.

Economic Commission for Europe

Project on rehabilitation engineering

In 1989, the ECE undertook an in-depth study on rehabilitation engineering. The project, to be conducted through a series of three workshops, is the basic ECE contribution to the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons and will be concluded with the issuance of a major publication.

The first Workshop on Rehabilitation Engineering, REHAB-1, took place in Washington, D.C. from 14-16 June 1990. It focused on the "state of the art", emerging rehabilitation technologies, and the enhancement of rehabilitation service delivery.

REHAB-2 was held at Fagernes, Norway, from 12-15 May 1991. This second workshop considered in more detail the economic and social aspects of rehabilitation engineering in individual countries.

The third and final workshop, REHAB-3, will be held at Trebon-Spa at the invitation of the Government of Czechoslovakia from 24-27 May 1992. National contributions presented by experts from Eastern Europe at the previous workshop showed that political and socio-economic changes in their countries have had significant consequences for the entire system of medical and social care of people with disabilities. The Trebon-Spa workshop will launch special supportive programmes and other activities beyond 1992.

Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

Contribution to the Decade

ESCAP's activities during the second half of the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons included advisory services to Governments and the publication of a handbook on community awareness programmes. ESCAP planned an awareness-raising campaign to mark the conclusion of the Decade and organized an expert group meeting to review and appraise the achievements of the Decade in 1991. The Regional Commission also adopted the Jakarta Plan of Action on Human Resources Development in the ESCAP region which identified disabled persons as a special target group.

Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia

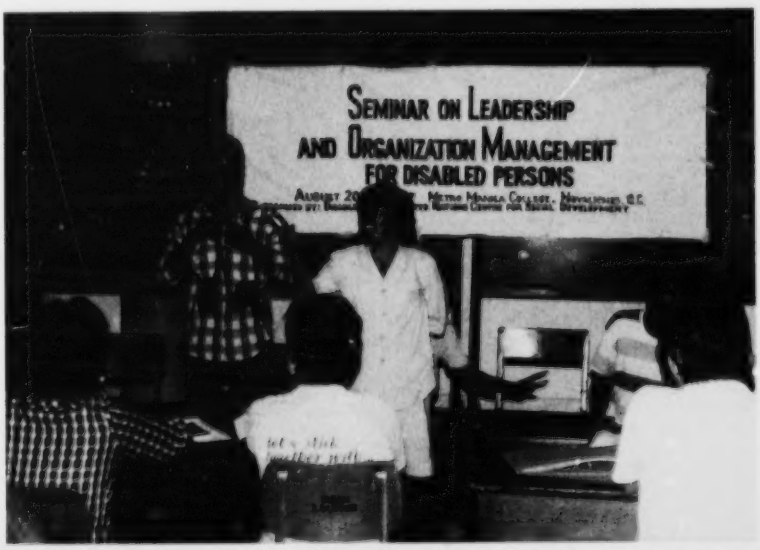
Guarding the interest of the region

ESCWA is acutely aware of the importance of disability issues in a region where some 10-15 million people are disabled, a figure which may be misleading because of the cultural stigmatization of disability and other reasons. In any event, the number is growing not only as a result of social, environmental, cultural and health factors but also as a consequence of armed conflict in the region.

Most notably, the wars in the region have produced a sharp increase in the number of disabled persons. In Lebanon, estimates of disability as a result of conflict range from 200,000 to 400,000 persons. In addition to the physically disabled, nationals of the region have suffered psychological and emotional impairment resulting from fear and anxiety.

ESCWA's social development programme has given a particular focus to disability issues as one of its main fields of activity under its social development and welfare subprogramme. The Commission has concentrated on a comprehensive review of national policies and programmes as well as the positive and negative factors affecting social security programmes. The first of these reports was devoted to disability issues.

To mark the end of the Decade, ESCWA will organize a cultural week for disabled persons in October 1992 to promote the World Programme of Action and the development of a long-term strategy to the year 2000 and beyond. The events will be held under the royal patronage of Queen Noor of Jordan. ■



Many training activities took place in the ESCAP region during the UN Decade of Disabled Persons, including leadership training seminars in the Philippines.

INTERNATIONAL CALENDAR OF EVENTS

DATE	TITLE/ACTIVITY	VENUE	ORGANIZATION/CONTACT
21-25 March 1992	Conference on Deaf-Blind Services in the '90s: Revitalization and Future Directions	Washington, D.C.	Marianne Riggio Perkins School for the Blind 175 North Beacon Street Watertown, Massachusetts 02172 United States
27 March 1992	Joint United Nations/FIMITIC Manifestation to Mark the End of the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons	Vienna	FIMITIC (Fédération internationale des Mutilés, des Invalides du Travail et des Invalides civils) c/o Reichsbund Beethovenallee 56-58 D-5300 Bonn 2 Germany
mid-April 1992	Start of the Trans-Russian Super-Marathon in Wheelchairs	Vladivostok	Adventure Club 15, Kosygin St. Moscow 117946 Russian Federation
22-27 April 1992	Third World Congress of Disabled Peoples' International	Vancouver	DPI Headquarters 504-352 Donald Street Winnipeg, Manitoba Canada, R3B 2H8
22-25 April 1992	"Independence '92"	Vancouver	Congress Manager International Congress and Exposition on Disability Suite 200 1190 Melville Street Vancouver, B.C. Canada V6E 3WI
25-29 April 1992	Expert-Group Meeting on the Formulation of a Long-Term Strategy to implement the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons to the year 2000 and beyond	Vancouver	CSDHA/DPU Vienna International Centre P.O. Box 500 A-1400 Vienna Austria
3-6 May 1992	National Symposium on Information Technology as it relates to Disability Services	Myrtle Beach, South Carolina	The University of South Carolina Center for Developmental Disabilities Benson Building, First Floor Columbia, South Carolina 29208 United States
5-8 May 1992	Fourth European Congress on Ergotherapy of the Committee of Occupational Therapists of the European Community	Ostend	Secretariat P.T.O. Langestraat 69 B-8400 Ostend Belgium

DATE	TITLE/ACTIVITY	VENUE	ORGANIZATION/CONTACT
8-10 May 1992	Fourth European Congress on Autism	The Hague	Secretariat Autism Europe Rue Emile Leger 4 B-1495 Villers-la-Ville Belgium
11-15 May 1992	Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group to Elaborate Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Disabled Persons, second session	Vienna	CSDHA/DPU Vienna International Centre P.O. Box 500, A-1400 Vienna, Austria
12-14 May 1992	Fifth World Congress of the International Road Safety Organisation (PRI)	Istanbul	La Prévention Routière Internationale 75 rue de Mamer, B.P. 40 L-8005 Luxembourg-Bertrange Luxembourg
24-27 May 1992	Third Workshop on Rehabilitation Engineering: REHAB-3	Trebon-Spa, Czechoslovakia	ECE Focal Point for the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons Industry and Technology Division Palais des Nations CH-1211 Geneva 10 Switzerland
June 1992	General Assembly of the International Federation of Anti-Leprosy Associations (ILEP)	Montreal	International Federation of Anti-Leprosy Associations 234 Blythe Road London W14 OHJ United Kingdom
19-27 June 1992	1992 Midnite Sun Wheelchair Marathon	Anchorage	Midnite Sun Wheelchair Marathon 3710 Woodland Drive, Suite 900 Anchorage, 99517, Alaska United States
July 1992	Eighth International Conference on AIDS	Amsterdam	World Health Organization Office of Information CH-1211 Geneva 27 Switzerland
13-17 July 1992	Performances in Vienna by the China Disabled Peoples' Performing Art Troupe on the first part of a tour through several European countries	Vienna International Centre: 13 July 1992; Akzent/Arbeiterkammer: 14 and 15 July 1992; Rehabilitation Centre Weisser Hof: 16 July 1992; Arkadenhof/ Festsaal of the Vienna City Hall: 17 July 1992	Allgemeine Unfallversicherungsanstalt Adalbert-Stifter-Str. 65 A-1200 Vienna Austria

DATE	TITLE/ACTIVITY	VENUE	ORGANIZATION/CONTACT
8-13 August 1992	Meeting of the International League of Societies for Persons with Mental Handicap (ILSMH)	Amsterdam	Federatie van Ouderenverenigingen Stadhouderslaan 43 3583 JC Utrecht Netherlands
30 August-3 September 1992	Conference on the Changing Status and Emerging Roles of the Elderly in the 21st Century	Bombay and Pune	International Federation on Ageing c/o Kesari 568 Narayan Peth Pune 411030 India
31 August-4 September 1992	Twenty-first International Congress on Audiology	Morioka City	Department of Otolaryngology Iwate University 1-9 Uchimaru Marioka 020 Japan
3-14 September 1992	Summer Paralympics	Barcelona	Josef Lainz COOB '92 Travessera de les Corts 131-159 08028 Barcelona Spain
7-11 September 1992	Seventeenth World Congress of Rehabilitation International	Nairobi	Executive Director Seventeenth World Congress of Rehabilitation International P.O. Box 56643 Nairobi Kenya
8-11 September 1992	PREVCON '92: International Conference on Hearing Impairment Prevention and the Strategies and Methods designed for Developing Communities	Johannesburg	Private Bag X04 Westhoven 2142 South Africa
13-20 September 1992	Paralympic Games for Persons with Mental Handicap	Madrid	General Sekretariat Box 207, S-B 71 24 Härnösand Sweden
October 1992	Annual Meeting of the International Medical Society of Paraplegia	Barcelona	Chairman Scientific Committee International Medical Society of Paraplegia Centre de Réadaptation 57 rue Albert Camus 68093 Mulhouse Cedex France

DATE	TITLE/ACTIVITY	VENUE	ORGANIZATION/CONTACT
1-6 November 1992	Fifth International Congress on Rehabilitation in Psychiatry	Jerusalem	Fifth International Congress on Rehabilitation in Psychiatry P.O. Box 50006 Tel Aviv 61500, Israel
13-16 November 1992	Seventh World Congress of the International Retinitis Pigmentosa Association	Sandton City, Johannesburg	RP Foundation of South Africa P.O. Box 2395 Primrose 1416, South Africa
30 November-4 December 1992	World Confederation of Physical Therapy: Private Practitioners International Meeting and Exhibition	Hong Kong	WCPT Private Practitioners International Meeting and Exhibition ICC Ltd. Suites A & B 16th Floor, Casey Building 38 Lok Ku Road Sheung Wan, Hong Kong

EDITOR'S NOTE

The *Disabled Persons Bulletin* is published three times a year by the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs of the United Nations Office at Vienna, as an information exchange service to Governments, United Nations agencies, professionals, non-governmental organizations and disabled persons.

All information in the *Bulletin* may be copied, summarized or translated into any language without authorization, on condition that the source is acknowledged and a copy of the publication is sent to the Editor.

The designations employed and the presentation of the material in this *Bulletin* do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the United Nations Secretariat concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area, or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries.

The Editor welcomes news items from national disability committees, Governments and non-governmental organizations. Short articles and viewpoints on disability issues by disabled persons are also welcome. The Editor of the *Disabled Persons Bulletin* reserves the right to edit and publish manuscripts in line with the requirements of the publication.

All mail should be addressed to:

Editor, Disabled Persons Bulletin, Disabled Persons Unit
Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs
United Nations Office at Vienna
P.O. Box 500
Vienna International Centre
A-1400 Vienna
Autsria

This publication is being issued in connection with the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons.

V.92-52151—May 1992—3,000 ISSN 1011-7814 Printed in Austria

Courtesy of the Disabled Persons Bulletin